



# Young People Having Fun and Developing New Skills

## *Team Fun*

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Please note: The Youth Minister's Round Table of Young Territorians is an independent advisory council. The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and are not necessarily those of the Office of Youth Affairs or the Northern Territory Government.

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## **Acknowledgements**

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## **Executive Summary**

*Team Fun* is made up of three young people all living in regional centres in the Northern Territory. Chee is 25 and lives and works in Tennant Creek. Emily Ryan is 16 and lives and goes to school in Alice Springs. Kelsey Rodda is 22 and lives and works in Alice Springs.

We came together at the first Youth Round Table meeting in February and decided to form *Team Fun* when we discovered that we all had a common interest in sport and shared the same concerns about the lack of entertainment in our respective towns.

We agreed that the availability of events and entertainment for young people is vital in keeping kids out of trouble. While there are many events in our home towns for the general population there are very few youth targeted events that actually relate to the varied interests of young people. As our results will show later, sport and music are not the only interests for young people.

An issue of importance to be studied during the survey process was how widely opinions and likes differed between either end of the age spectrum. While a 12 year old and a 25 year old may both like music, their tastes may differ greatly. One of the great challenges of providing entertainment for young people is not only covering the wide range of interests, but also covering the many different categories within that interest.

We set about investigating what young people aged between 12 and 25 thought about what events and activities were on offer and how they actually related to their interests. We also asked how the events and their promotion could be improved.

Our survey was relatively short with 13 questions. We felt this was an ideal number of questions as anything longer than this would result in respondents losing interest. The 13 questions were a mix of yes/no questions, open ended questions and guided questions. We thought that with a good mix of questions we could really find out what young people thought and get accurate results to base our recommendations on.

We decided not to delve into the social or economic backgrounds of any of our survey respondents. For the purposes of this survey, we assumed that all young people in regional centres had the same access to events and entertainment. Our survey was a general look at the needs of young people and not about their socio-economic backgrounds.

The surveys were distributed amongst local schools and through friends. At the end of the survey period we had a good size sample of young people in our respective towns. We would have liked to have had more responses but time and resources worked against us. We still feel that the number of completed surveys received was a good achievement.

The findings from our investigation showed that young people thought that more varied events offered on a more regular basis were needed. Specifically, events targeted to those aged under 18 years were requested. Also of note was the perceived need for more promotion of events put on for young people.

Key findings and recommendations include:

***Alice Springs Region:***

- A need for more diverse sporting activities and better facilities.
- Youth want more live music and concerts.
- Lack of workshops and exhibitions for young people outside of the school environment.
- A lack of advertising and promotion of events for young people.
- A lack of awareness of youth organisations.
- A need for more under age facilities such as a “youth nightclub”.

***Tennant Creek Region:***

- A need for more diverse sporting activities and better facilities.
- Youth want more live music and concerts.
- Lack of workshops and exhibitions for young people outside of the school environment.

*Team Fun* hope that the findings of this investigation into the entertainment of young people assist the decision makers in the Northern Territory to provide better entertainment and activities for the future leaders of this country.

## **Introduction**

Once we formed *Team Fun* in the first face-to-face meeting of the year, we went about investigating the perception amongst young people that there is a lack of entertainment and things to do in our regions of Alice Springs and Tennant Creek. All of us had witnessed the consequences of bored youth first hand and the perception by many of the adult community that young people are simply 'trouble makers'. This couldn't be further from the truth. The youth of our regions are talented and bright people who just want to have fun with their friends.

Both regions experience problems with bored underage kids that have nothing else to do but to hang out on the streets. Unfortunately, more often than not, this leads to general bad behaviour and in worst case can lead to criminal activity. While we're not saying there is a large amount of kids on the street, we are recognising the problem is there and it is not race-based.

We agreed that the availability of events and entertainment for young people is vital in keeping kids out of trouble. We wanted to find out what young people are interested in and want to see more of. We decided the best way to do this was through a survey, giving youth the opportunity to tell us exactly what they thought about the issue.

We also wanted to find out what over eighteen's thought about the entertainment and activities available to their age group. This age group think a lot differently to their under age counterparts due to their increased responsibility, accountability and ability to legally consume alcohol.

We wanted to target all age groups between 12 and 25 years to ensure all youth were represented. Surveys were to be distributed throughout schools, workplaces, sporting arenas and the general public (see appendix one and two). We wanted to survey as many young people as possible to ensure a wide cross-section of the youth in our regions were reached.

Our aim was to try and survey 10% of the youth population in both Alice Springs and Tennant Creek. In Alice Springs we managed to survey 8% of the youth population and 5% in Tennant Creek. Unfortunately we were disadvantaged in Tennant Creek due to Chee receiving a job transfer to Darwin in the middle of the year.

The Alice Springs team members, Emily and Kelsey, went into the project with an expectation to find the promotion of events was lacking which in turn gives the perception there isn't enough things for youth to do. While our Tennant Creek member, Chee, believed there was adequate promotion of events in Tennant Creek, there just weren't enough things to do.

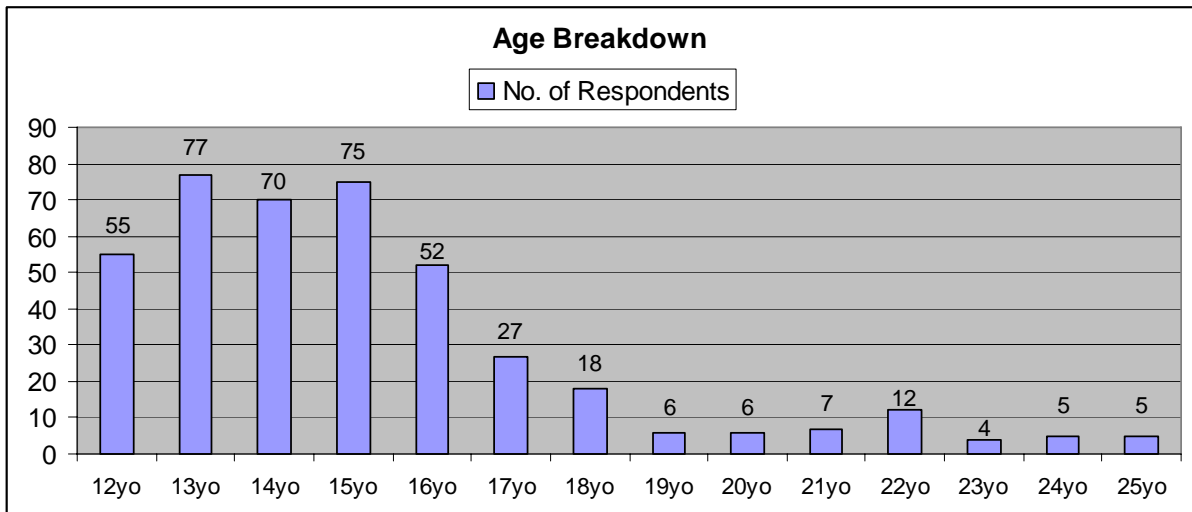
As the project went on, Emily and Kelsey were finding there was both a lack of promotion and entertainment while Chee discovered his beliefs were accurate. The youth of Alice Springs were screaming out for more things to do and to promote them better, while the youth of Tennant Creek were saying they know exactly what's going in their town – not a lot!

## **Major Findings**

### **SURVEY RESULTS**

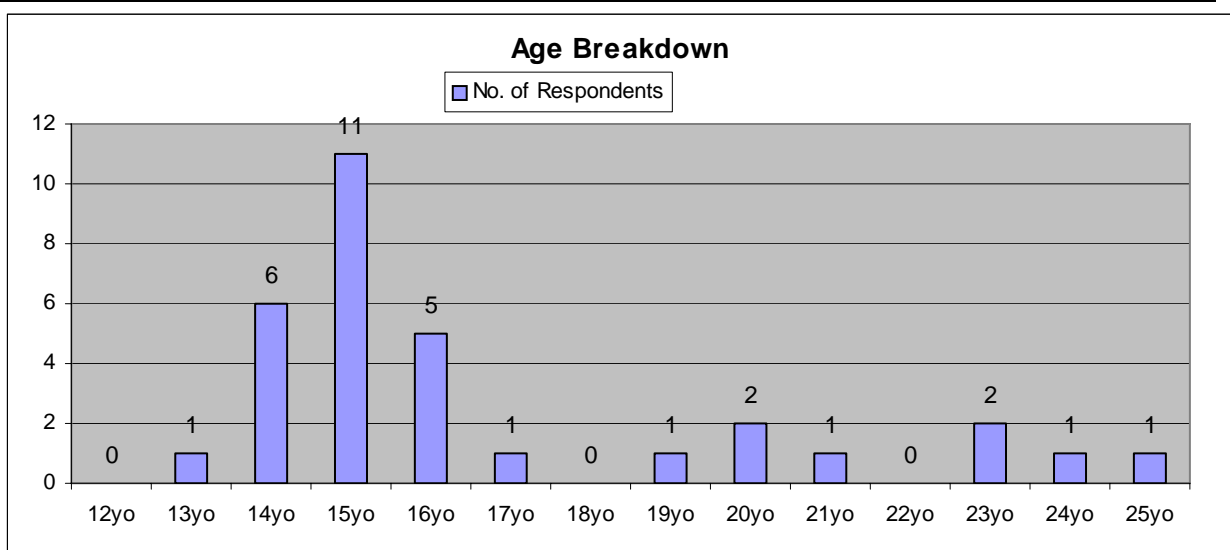
The Alice Springs survey had 419 respondents. This equated to 8% of the total youth in Alice Springs which is 5124<sup>1</sup>. 205 of those surveyed were male and 214 were female. This represents an almost 50% gender split.

In the graph below is the total number of respondents for each age:



As you can see the respondents were mostly in the younger age groups of 12 – 16 years. This was mostly due to the fact that we distributed our surveys to schools and these age groups were a captive audience.

In Tennant Creek 32 young people were surveyed, this equated to 5% of a total youth population of 602<sup>1</sup>. Of those surveyed 13 were male and 19 were female. The graph below shows the total number of respondents for each age group.



<sup>1</sup> 2001 Bureau of Statistics

#### **QUESTION 4: LEVEL OF ENJOYMENT FROM ACTIVITIES**

To determine what particular activities were of interest to young people, we used the following rating scale for a list of activities:

- 3: highly enjoy the activity
- 2: enjoy the activity
- 1: do not enjoy the activity

#### **Sport**

*Within this rating system we also asked respondents to identify their favourite sports.*

##### Alice Springs:

Of the 418 respondents, 294 of them said they highly enjoyed sport – rating it a 3. This equates to 70% of all respondents. A further 104 (25%) rated sport as a 2, and 20 (5%) said that they did not enjoy sport. The most popular sports were basketball, netball, football/soccer, motor sports, horse riding and tennis. Other sports listed included volleyball, rugby union, touch football, gymnastics, martial arts and swimming.

##### Tennant Creek:

Of the 32 respondents, 15 of them said they highly enjoyed sport – rating it a 3. This equates to 47% of all respondents. A further 104 (25%) rated sport as a 2, and 20 (5%) said that they did not enjoy sport. The most popular sports were basketball, netball, football/soccer, motor sports, horse riding and tennis. Other sports listed included volleyball, rugby union, touch football, gymnastics, martial arts and swimming.

#### **Outdoor**

##### Alice Springs:

For outdoor activities such as camping, we were surprised to find that 165 (40%) rated these activities as a 3 and 211 (50%) rated these activities as a 2. This represents a total of 376 (89%) respondents, enjoying the outdoor lifestyle. The high levels of enjoyment for outdoor activities could be attributed to the fact that there are so many opportunities for these activities to occur within the region. Alice Springs and Central Australia are full of well known camping spots, walking trails and natural attractions. Only 42 (10%) said that they did not enjoy outdoor activities, rating it as a 1.

### Tennant Creek:

Fifteen (47%) rated these activities as a 3 and 15 (47%) rated these activities as a 2. This represents a total of 30 (94%) respondents, enjoying the outdoor lifestyle. While two (6%) do not enjoy the outdoors rating it as a 1.

## **Arts**

*(Painting and drawing)*

### Alice Springs:

For arts activities 102 (24%) rated these activities as a 3. A further 191 (47%) rated arts as a 2 and 121 (29%) said that they did not enjoy arts based activities, rating it as a 1.

### Tennant Creek

For arts activities 9 (28%) rated these activities as a 3. A further 13 (41%) rated arts as a 2 and 10 (31%) said that they did not enjoy arts based activities, rating it as a 1.

## **Performing Arts**

*(Drama and dancing)*

### Alice Springs:

Performing arts was rated as highly enjoyed by 110 (26%), 154 (37%) said that they enjoyed performing arts, rating it as a 2, with 153 (37%) saying they did not enjoy these activities.

### Tennant Creek:

Performing arts was rated as highly enjoyed by 8 (25%), 5 (16%) said that they enjoyed performing arts, rating it as a 2, with 19 (59%) saying they did not enjoy these activities.

## **Music**

*(Live performances etc)*

### Alice Springs:

Music was rated as an activity that is highly enjoyed by 172 (41%) and enjoyed by 159 (38%). 87 (21%) rated music as an activity they did not enjoy. In the age groups of 19 – 25 years, not a single respondent rated music as an activity that they did not enjoy. Interestingly, the most “do not enjoy” ratings came from the 12 – 15 year age bracket.

### Tennant Creek

The young people of Tennant Creek rated music as an activity that is highly enjoyed by 5 (16%) and 10 (31%) found music to be enjoyable. 17 (53%) rated music as an activity they did not enjoy.

## **Reading & Writing**

### Alice Springs:

Fifty two (13%) rated reading and writing activities as something they highly enjoyed while 159 (38%) rated reading and writing as an activity they enjoyed, which interestingly was exactly the same number of people who rated music as an activity they enjoyed. A total of 206 (49%) said they did not enjoy reading and writing activities.

### Tennant Creek:

6 (19%) rated reading and writing activities as something they highly enjoyed while 3 (9%) rated reading and writing as an activity they enjoyed. A total of 23 (72%) said they did not enjoy reading and writing activities.

## **Technological**

*(Such as video games and computer games)*

### Alice Springs:

A total of 127 (30%) rated technological activities as an activity they highly enjoyed. Most of these ratings of 3 were found in the 12-15 year old age bracket. 189 (45%) rated these activities as something enjoyed while 103 (25%) did not enjoy technologically based activities.

Tennant Creek:

A total of 1 (3%) rated technological activities as an activity they highly enjoyed. 13 (41%) rated these activities as something enjoyed while 18 (56%) did not enjoy technologically based activities.

**Others**

We gave respondents the chance to identify other activities not listed that they enjoyed to assist in our research.

Alice Springs:

Other activities enjoyed included hanging out with friends, spending time with family, going to the cinema, going bowling, cooking, shopping and going to parties.

Tennant Creek:

Other activities enjoyed included hanging out with friends, spending time with family, going to the cinema, going bowling, cooking, shopping and going to parties.

**The results of Question 4 are seen below in the graph:**

Figure 1.1 – Alice Springs

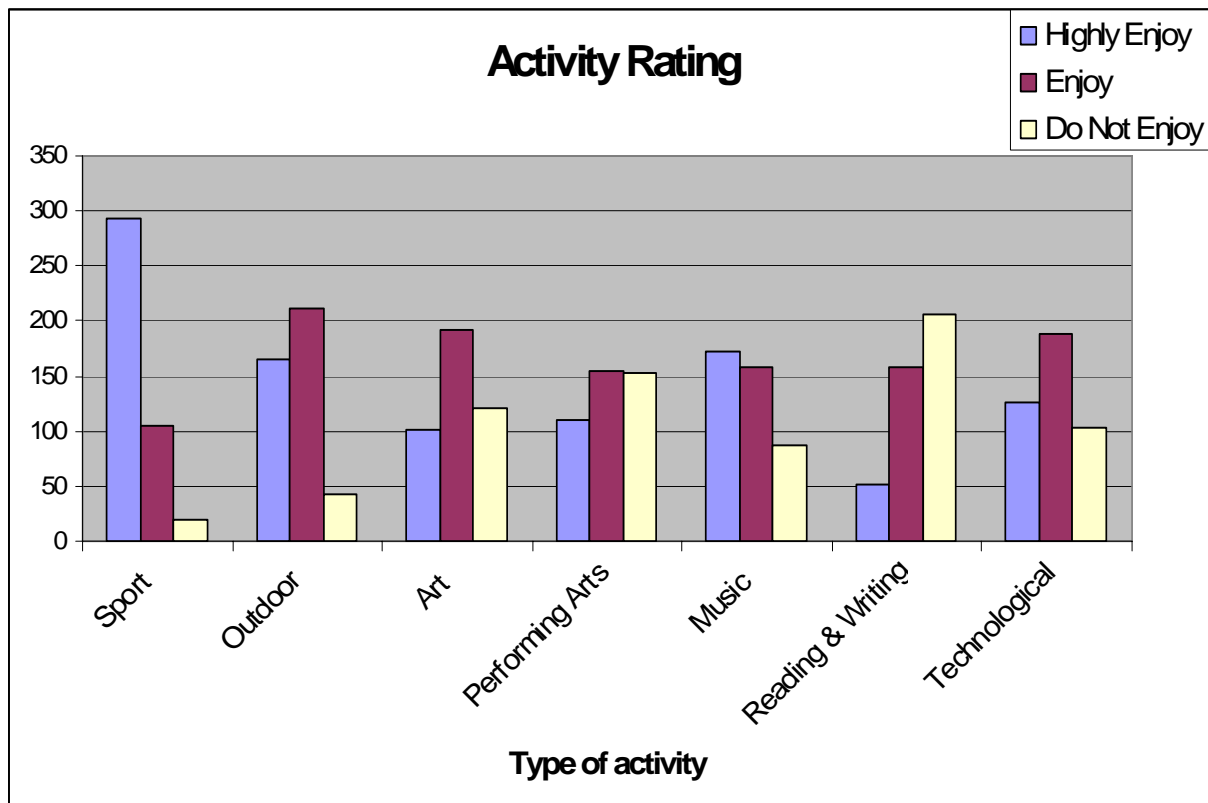
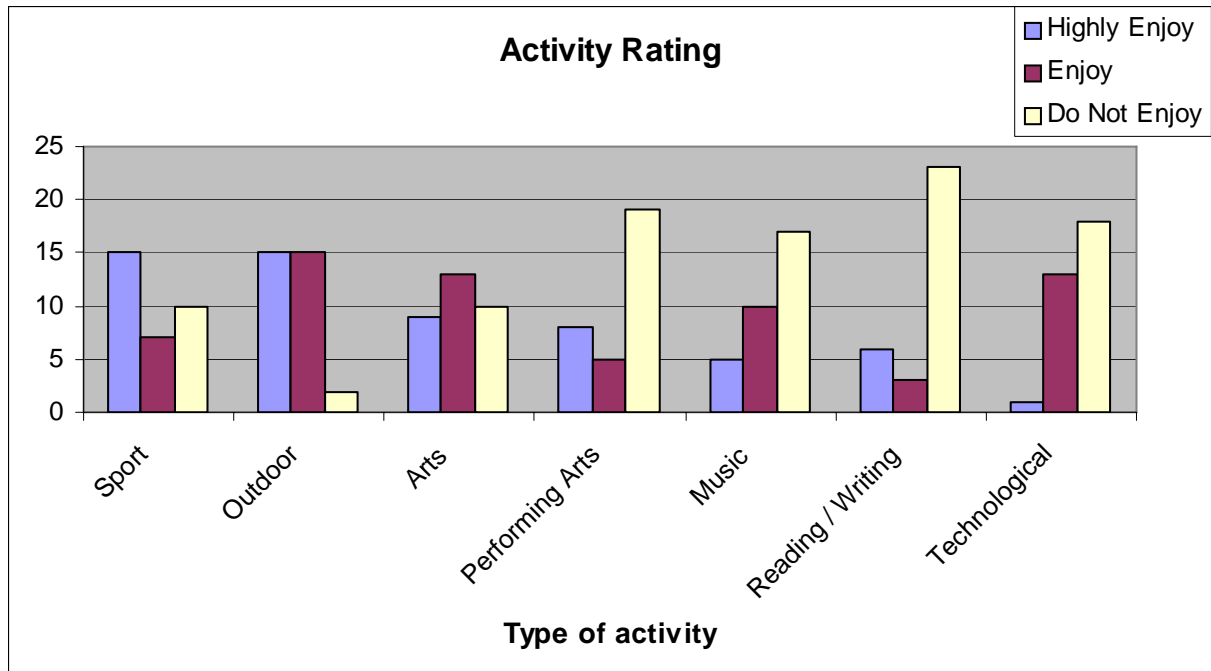


Figure 1.2 – Tennant Creek



#### QUESTION 5: ENTERTAINMENT LEVELS

Question 5 asked respondents if they felt there was a lack of entertainment for youth in their region.

##### Alice Springs:

Not surprisingly, 298 (71%) felt that there was a lack of things for young people to do in town. Forty (10%) felt there was enough entertainment for young people with most of these answers coming from 12 and 13 year olds. A further 81 (19%) were unsure.

##### Tennant Creek:

26 (81%) stated in their survey that there was a lack of activities to entertain the youth of Tennant Creek. 3 (9%) of the young people surveyed conceded that there were sufficient activities around town to keep them occupied and another 3 (9%) noted that they were unsure.

## **QUESTION 6: ATTENDANCE AT YOUTH EVENTS**

This question asked people to rate how often they went to youth-related events.

### Alice Springs:

Sixty five (16%) attended events on a *regular basis*. Fifty five (13%) attended events *once a month* ; 211 (50%) attended events *a few times a year*; 42 (10%) attended events *once a year*; and 47 (11%) never attended youth events . None of the respondents aged 21-25 years said that they never attended events for youth.

### Tennant Creek:

8 (25%) of the young people surveyed indicated they attend events held in Tennant Creek on a regular basis; 16 (50%) attended events a few times a year, 4 (12%) attended events once a year, and another 4 (12%) never attended youth events.

## **QUESTION 7: RELEVANCE OF YOUTH EVENTS**

The purpose of this question was to find out if young people felt that the events held specifically for them actually related to their interests.

### Alice Springs:

A total of 139 (33%) believed that events held for youth related to the interests of youth. Seventy (19%) believed that the events held for young people were not relevant to the interests of young people while 201 (48%) were unsure of the relevance of youth events to young people in Alice Springs.

### Tennant Creek:

9 (28%) of the young people of Tennant Creek surveyed found the events held were of interest to them. 10 (31%) indicated that the events held were of no interest to the young people, and 13 (41%) of the young people were unsure.

## **QUESTION 8: METHODS OF ADVERTISING**

The purpose of this question was to find out what types of advertising young people had seen in the promotion of youth events.

### Alice Springs:

This question allowed people to tick all the answers that applied. A total of 158 (38%) had seen advertisements for youth events on TV; 104 (25%) had seen advertisements in the newspaper; 13 (3%) had seen advertising on the internet; 193 (46%) had heard about youth events through their friends; and 64 (15%) had heard about upcoming events through their school (newsletters, posters, teachers etc), obviously being from the age groups of 12 – 18 years. Other advertising streams noted by respondents included radio advertising; posters, banners and flyers; and getting information from parents and coaches.

### Tennant Creek:

4 (12%) stated that they were made aware of the events by advertisements of the event on Television; 10 (31%) saw the event advertisement in the newspaper; 1 (3%) had seen the advertisement on the internet; 14 (44%) knew about the event through their friends and 15 (47%) indicated they heard about the events through the school.

## **QUESTION 9: ADEQUACY OF AMOUNT OF ADVERTISING**

This question sought to find out how many young people felt that the events held in the community were advertised adequately.

### Alice Springs:

Of those surveyed 156 (37%) felt that youth events were promoted enough; 152 (36%) were unsure about the amount of advertising for youth events; and 112 (27%) felt that there was not adequate promotion of youth events. Those who answered that they felt there was not adequate promotion of youth events were further asked to provide suggestions on how this advertising could be improved. Answers received included greater television, radio and newspaper advertising; more posters put up around town; and flyers/brochures delivered to homes around the community.

Tennant Creek:

11 (34%) of the young people surveyed in Tennant Creek indicated that upcoming youth events were adequately promoted; 9 (28%) weren't sure about the events were well promoted and 12 (38%) indicated that there were insufficient promotion of upcoming events in Tennant Creek.

**QUESTION 10: AWARENESS OF YOUTH ORGANISATIONS**

This question asked respondents to tell us whether they knew of any youth organisations in their region.

Alice Springs:

A total of 155 (37%) were unsure of youth organisations and 178 (42%) said they were not aware of any youth organisations in Alice Springs, combined meant 333 or 79% of those surveyed weren't aware of any youth organisations. Eighty six (21%) said they knew of youth organisations and were asked to list any that they were aware of. Organisations listed included Alice Springs Youth Centre, Gap Youth Centre, YMCA, sporting clubs and associations, church groups, and schools.

Tennant Creek:

Only 4 (12%) of the young people surveyed were aware of the youth organisations that were responsible for organising events in Tennant Creek. They indicated the Tennant Creek Town Council, Centrecare and Tennant Creek Sports and Recreational Centre as the youth organisations they were aware of. 17 (53%) were not aware of the youth organisations and their roles. 11 (34%) were unsure of the youth organisations.

**QUESTION 11: AGE GROUPS NOT CATERED TO**

The purpose of this question was to find out whether people thought there were age groups that did not have any activities that catered to them.

Alice Springs:

A total of 165 (40%) said that there were age groups without activities catered to them; 106 (25%) felt that there were no particular age groups who had missed out on activities while 147 (35%) were unsure. The age groups listed by those responding yes mostly focused around age groups under 18 years of age, particularly the 13-16 year old age group.

Tennant Creek:

15 (47%) believe that there were age groups, particularly between 20-25 years of age where the events held in Tennant Creek were not catered for. 7 (22%) said that they felt that there were no particular age groups who had missed out. 10 (31%) were unsure.

**QUESTION 12: EVENTS ATTENDED**

This question was designed to find out what particular events put on in Alice Springs and Tennant Creek were attended by youth. We made this question a list to try and jog the memories of the respondents so that we could get an accurate picture of what events were attended. The results are below.

Alice Springs:

Event	Number attended
Alice Springs Show	282 (67%)
Finke Desert Race	268 (64%)
AFL	196 (47%)
BassInTheDust	191 (46%)
Crusty Demons	189 (45%)
NRL	166 (40%)
Shows at Araluen Centre	155 (37%) (OLSH Concert most popular)
Eisteddfod	122 (29%)
Henley on Todd	87 (21%)
Concerts	84 (20%) (Rogue Traders most popular)
Alice Desert Festival	82 (20%)
Art exhibitions	51 (12%)
Other	44 (11%) (Croc Fest most popular)

Tennant Creek:

Event	Number attended
Tennant Creek Show	24 (75%)
Tennant Creek Speedway	17 (53%)
Tennant Creek Drags	17 (53%)
Desert Harmony Week	13 (41%)
Blue Light Disco	12 (38%)
Nyinkka Nyunyu	7 (22%)
Centrecare	2 (6%)

**QUESTION 13: EVENTS/FACILITIES WANTED**

This question was an open question to find out what events and facilities were wanted by the youth of each region.

Alice Springs:

An overwhelming number of respondents to this question wanted more concerts and live music. Youth of all age groups wanted local, national and international acts to perform in Alice Springs. More all-age concerts were requested.

Sport also proved to be a popular request. Survey participants wanted more high-level sport of different varieties including motor sport, netball, basketball and soccer to name a few, more AFL games including a season game, more NRL games, upgrade of current sporting facilities to accommodate national sporting codes and Crusty Demons to come back.

Many of the respondents under the age of eighteen wanted to see a under age nightclub to hang out and catch up with friends. Paintball and laser skirmish were also mentioned more than once.

### Tennant Creek:

When I asked this question to the young people of Tennant Creek, they came up with ideas like concerts from major music artists, water theme park, etc. After telling them that their ideas had to be realistic and within the capability of Tennant Creek youth organisations, the majority of the young people of Tennant Creek said they wanted sporting activities. They specified some sports that they would like to participate in, like rugby, basketball, netball and tennis, but they also indicated that they wanted to try different sporting activities as well.

The young people of Tennant Creek also expressed significant interest in building relationships with adults and indicated interest in activities that would enhance their peer relationships. Tennant Creek young people gave strong support for more informal programs or places where their time is not overly structured, where they can stop by, hang out, and be more spontaneous in choosing what they want to do. The young people of Tennant Creek made it clear that their time is so structured during the school day that what they really want is a safe place just to "chill" and relax with peers, where there are things to do if they wanted, and where they could come and go as they please. As one young person put it: "I want a place where you feel comfortable, a place that's familiar, a place where you know the people there, a place where you can come and go, and not have to stay the whole time and do only what the staff tell you to do."

While young people are most interested in informal activities, many are interested in structured activities as well. These include taking lessons, playing sports, dances, youth-led programs, and those organized by youth services.

Perhaps the strongest, clearest message from the focus groups was that young people want programs specifically for their age group. They believe many programs serve too wide of an age range so 12 and 13 year olds are in the same programs with 9 and 10 year olds. These programs were perceived to be for "little kids."

## **ISSUES ARISING FROM SURVEYS**

### **Alice Springs:**

The main issue that was of concern to us was the lack of awareness of youth organisations in Alice Springs. With dedicated youth providers including the Alice Springs Youth Centre and the Gap Youth Centre it was alarming to find many respondents didn't know about them or what they do.

Promotion of events and activities aimed at youth in Alice Springs was found to be not adequate by participants. Promotion is an important key to the success of an event or activity therefore an increase in promotion could change the issue of lack of awareness as mentioned in the previous paragraph.

Another issue was the large number of respondents wanting an under age nightclub/hangout were 12-17 year olds can catch up with friends in a controlled environment they feel comfortable in. This also shows many young people don't go to or feel comfortable going to the Alice Springs Youth Centre for this reason.

### **Tennant Creek:**

The major issue arising from the survey was that 26 participants or 81% of respondents believe there is a lack of things for youth to do in Tennant Creek. This is evidence that the perception of a lack of things to do is shared by many.

Another issue to come out of the survey was the need for more sporting activities after school hours. Sport is a vital part of the Tennant Creek community and many kids would benefit from more sport to participate in.

It was also concerning that only 4 participants or 12% of respondents were aware of organisations in Tennant Creek who cater to youth. This shows these organisations need to work on promoting their events/services better and engage the kids they are catering to.

## **Recommendations**

### **ALICE SPRINGS**

#### **1. Need more diverse sporting activities and better facilities.**

While there is high interest in Alice Springs for football and motor sport events, there are also a number of other sporting events that prove popular amongst the youth. For example, the Alice Springs Netball Association has the most netball players in the Northern Territory. Alice Springs would be an ideal place to feature a top class netball game and would draw a large crowd. However, there has never been a top class netball game here and there is no suitable facility in town for this to occur. The same is true for other popular sports amongst the youth in Alice Springs including soccer and basketball. Government investment in multi-sport facilities is vital in getting top level athletes here from a wide range of sports and getting the youth of Alice Springs engaged.

#### **2. Need more art workshops and exhibitions for young people.**

293 (71%) of respondents rated art as an activity that they either highly enjoy or enjoy. Yet with this number of positive responses for art, there is a lack of activities, other than those based in the classroom, for youth that enjoy art. There needs to be more workshops and classes for youth interested in art and more exhibitions for young people to enter. These could be promoted through schools to get the maximum number of participants possible.

#### **3. Need more live music and concerts.**

One thing that became clear through collating the survey results was that youth were screaming out for more live music. *BassInTheDust* proved extremely popular in 2006 and this popularity was based on the high quality bands that performed. There is also a need for more concerts for the 12-17 year age bracket. This age bracket is not able to attend most live music performances in licensed premises and therefore miss out on many events. Security would also have to be investigated if an underage venue (Recommendation 6) or underage gigs were held to prevent alcohol being brought in.

#### **4. Need more advertising and better promotion of events.**

Better advertising and promotion of events was a key finding in the Alice Springs survey. We do not have a dedicated youth publication such as a youth newspaper or mini magazine. Degener8 was an initiative of Carrie Barlow, a former Round Table member, who came up with the idea to promote events aim at the youth of Alice Springs through an ‘entertainment’ newspaper. Unfortunately the newspaper had to rely on volunteers and has since stopped being published. Darwin has a youth newspaper called ‘The Grind’ which is released quarterly. It is produced with help from the Darwin City Council and volunteers – mostly young people with an interest in journalism and publishing. A publication like this would be ideal for Alice Springs. This would require the support of the Alice Springs Town Council and/or the Northern Territory Government.

One thing that is missing at the moment is an Alice Springs based youth website where young people can get information about upcoming events, shopping guides and competitions. The Alice Springs Town Council and the Northern Territory Government both have a page dedicated to youth, however the information on it isn’t aimed at promoting events such as concerts etc. in Alice Springs. A youth website for Alice Springs would need heavy advertising to begin with through TV, radio and schools to make sure that youth were aware of the site and its purpose. This website could also get feedback from youth on events that have been held and events that are wanted in the future. Combined with a regular column in the newspaper and a segment on radio (at a regular time during the Net 30 Countdown on Sun FM and Roots FM) this would increase awareness of events for young people and reverse the findings of our survey where 264 (63%) of young people felt that events held in the community were not adequately promoted.

## **5. Need more awareness of youth organisations.**

This recommendation could be coupled with the previous recommendation noting that more advertising and promotion for youth events was needed. The organisations that are already set up to provide events and activities for youth could be given the opportunity to advertise on the youth website and in the radio segments and newspaper columns. As individual groups, it is important that they recognise that their services are not getting through to all of the youth of Alice Springs and adjust their own advertising.

It was concerning that of those people surveyed 333 or 79% were not aware of organisations in Alice Springs who catered to youth. Organisations such as the Alice Springs Youth Centre, YMCA and Gap Youth Centre all have programs and activities for young people, however their promotion and/or popularity amongst young people appears to be lacking from the results of our survey.

## **6. Need facilities for underage youth**

As mentioned in Recommendation 3, events and activities for youth under the age of 18 are lacking in Alice Springs. This could be addressed by opening a specific venue for youth under the age of 18 where activities and events are held on a regular basis. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the layout of this venue needs to be youth-friendly or “cool” and needs to be multi-purpose so that the activities held within it are not limited.

Youth facilities such as the Alice Springs Youth Centre, are dated and unappealing to many youth. They are aimed at kids under 18, however when speaking to kids in this age group they think it's just for '10 year olds' and would never use the facilities.

Kelsey attended a Women's Youth Forum held in Alice Springs by the Chief Minister Clare Martin and Youth Minister Marion Scrymgour. In this meeting six of the seven groups of young women expressed a need for an 'underage nightclub'. They believed the facility would keep kids off the street and it would provide somewhere comfortable for them to hang out with friends in a 'cool', alcohol free environment where they can dance the night away. They believed other youth facilities in town such as the Alice Springs Youth Centre didn't provide this type of environment and kids just won't go there.

## **TENNANT CREEK**

### **Responding to the Needs**

The need for youth development opportunities is clear and the interest is strong. These programs can have a lasting impact on young people's well-being, yet too few of Tennant Creek's youth, like young people across the Northern Territory, participate in these structured activities. Several recommendations grow out of this study:

#### **1. Highlight the Importance of Youth Development Programs**

Youth development programs are an essential ingredient in a community's commitment to young people. That's an important message in a time of tight and decreasing budgets for services for children, youth, and families. These programs in community centres, community agencies, youth-serving organisations, congregations, and other settings represent cost-effective approaches to addressing the youth issues that trouble most communities.

#### **2. Identify and Promote Available Opportunities**

During our questioning of Tennant Creek youth, we discovered how little is known about available programs in communities. A key challenge, then, is for youth program providers of all types to join in a coordinated network that provides a full continuum of youth development opportunities that are easily accessed and appeal to all types of youth in the community. In addition, efforts are needed to make parents and youth aware of available programs.

#### **3. Examine Program Effectiveness**

It is not enough just to offer any program. Programs need to embody youth development principles and be responsive to young people's interests and needs. Only then will they be likely to attract and retain young people's interests.

#### **4. Recognise the Value of Both Formal and Informal Opportunities**

A key message from Tennant Creek's youth is that they do not necessarily need lots of highly structured programs. They want safe, positive places where they can form relationships with both peers and adults, have fun doing constructive activities, and relax. That interest needs to be balanced with interesting, structured programs that intentionally nurture young people's development.

## **5. Mobilise Support for and Involvement in Programs**

If youth program providers are to reach their potential for expanding and improving programs, they cannot do it alone. Like schools, they must begin emphasizing the importance of community involvement and partnerships. People in higher education, business, and corporate communities need to be challenged to support youth programs through sponsorship, resources, volunteer involvement, and family-friendly policies.

The evidence continues to mount for recognising youth development opportunities as essential for young people's healthy development, not as nice additions if extra resources or time are available. The challenge is to discover ways to involve all youth meaningfully in quality programs and to provide those programs with the support they need to be effective.

## **Evaluation**

### *Alice Springs:*

We believe that we have highlighted the importance of youth based events in Alice Springs during the course of this year. By being involved in the Youth Round Table, we have been able to successfully negotiate with the Alice Springs Town Council to keep Alice's biggest youth concert, BassInTheDust, at Anzac Oval and help with the promotion of the event which saw a significant increase in attendance numbers. Through this, many people realised the youth of Alice Springs can successfully stand up for what they believe in.

Time management proved the most difficult obstacle. Due to school and work commitments as well as other volunteer projects we helped with, our time was limited. We did not anticipate the time it would take to collate surveys, therefore leaving us less time to compile our report.

The lessons we have learnt from this experience is that time management is the key to a successful project. We should have followed our original time line more closely as this would have prevented such a large workload towards the end of the year. We also have a better understanding of what sort of events the youth of Alice Springs enjoy and the talent this town has in its youth.

### *Tennant Creek:*

One problem that I experienced was getting bogged down in the report. It started off well, then I became bored with the topic. What at first seemed interesting then became labored and tedious. Several times I thought that I may have embarked upon the wrong project, and the work which lies ahead seemed doubly onerous. However I pressed on and approached the report from a different angle and start working on a different part of the report.

Meeting the completion date was a very big problem. This is partly because the team members were from different towns in the Northern Territory and it was quite difficult to work on the project together. It was also quite difficult to estimate the time required for research and writing. Getting the survey out to the young people of Tennant Creek took unexpectedly longer than I had planned. And during the course of the year a number of personal and work issues cropped up unexpectedly to delay the production of the report. I had to sacrifice other activities to release time for completing the report and had to renegotiate a new cut-off date with the Coordinator. The team leader did a wonderful job in delegating the tasks to the other members and had to sacrifice a lot of her time to see the completion of the report.

## **Conclusion**

Alice Springs and Tennant Creek face the same challenges as many remote towns across the Northern Territory.

The main thing young people of both regions want is to have their needs met. Different things are important to different people at different ages. Having fun is pretty important to young people. So is being popular and having friends. They don't want to have any big issues with parents - having a good family life really helps.

In well-functioning communities, youth sports may seem like just a pastime, but their value is seen most clearly in their absence. Young people desire places to congregate and things to do. If these are not provided, they will find their own, often gathering in parking lots, cruising streets or taking up antisocial activities.

The evidence continues to mount for recognising young people's development opportunities as essential in establishing healthy development. The challenge is to discover ways to involve all young people meaningfully in quality programs and to provide those programs with the support they need to be effective.

We hope this report provided an insight into what the youth of Alice Springs and Tennant Creek like to do to have fun.

## **Appendices**

*Appendix One:*

Alice Springs Survey



## 2006 Youth Minister's Round Table of Young Territorians Having Fun and Developing Skills Youth Activities/Events Survey

If you're aged 12 to 25 years and live in Alice Springs, we need your help! By participating in this survey you are helping us to determine what sort of events/activities young people in Alice Springs like to participate in and would like to see more of in the future. *Please return completed survey to 'Youth Activities/Events Survey', PO Box 1746, Alice Springs NT 0871 by Friday 8 September 2006.*

1. How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Male or Female (please circle)

3. Do you (please tick):

- Work full time
- Work part time
- Attend school/university full time
- Attend school/university part time

4. Please rate your enjoyment for the following activities:

1 = Do not Enjoy      2 = Enjoy      3 = Highly Enjoy

- Sport – (favourite) \_\_\_\_\_
- Outdoor (e.g. camping)
- Arts (crafts, drawing)
- Performing Arts (eg drama, dancing)
- Music (eg live performances)
- Reading/Writing (eg competitions, poetry writing)
- Technological (e.g. computers, game consoles etc)
- Other (please list) \_\_\_\_\_

5. Do you think there is a lack of entertainment and things for youth to do in Alice Springs?  
(Please circle)

Yes

No

Unsure

6. How often do you attend events held in the community for young people? (tick the answer that is most applicable)

- On a regular basis
- Once a month
- A few times a year
- Once a year
- Never

7. Do you think that events held for youth relate to young people's interests? *(Please circle)*

Yes

No

Unsure

8. When youth events are held in your community how do you hear about them?

*(tick the answer that is most applicable)*

Television advertisements

In newspapers

On the Internet

From your friends

From your school

Other *(please list)* \_\_\_\_\_

9. Do you feel events held in the community, aimed at youth, are promoted and advertised enough? *(Please circle)*

Yes

No

Unsure

If no, how can advertising be improved?

\_\_\_\_\_

10. Are you aware of any organisations in your community that coordinate recreational activities or events for young people? *(Please circle)*

Yes

No

Unsure

If yes, please list \_\_\_\_\_

11. Do you think there is a particular age group that doesn't really have any activities/events that caters to them? *(Please circle)*

Yes

No

Unsure

If so, what age? \_\_\_\_\_

12. Do/did you attend any of the following events/activities in Alice Springs?

BassInTheDust

Crusty Demons

Finke Desert Race

NRL Game

AFL Games

Alice Springs Show

Shows/Exhibitions at Araluen Centre *(please list)* \_\_\_\_\_

Henley On Todd Regatta

Alice Festival

Eisteddfod

Concerts *(please list)* \_\_\_\_\_

Art Exhibitions

Other *(please list)* \_\_\_\_\_

None of the above

13. What events/activities would you like to see happen in Alice Springs? *(Please list)*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you for participating.*

*Appendix Two:*  
Tennant Creek Survey



## 2006 Youth Minister's Round Table of Young Territorians Having Fun and Developing Skills Youth Activities/Events Survey

If you're aged 12 to 25 years and live in Tennant Creek, we need your help! By participating in this survey you are helping us to determine what sort of events/activities young people in Tennant Creek like to participate in and would like to see more of in the future. *Please return completed survey to 'Youth Activities/Events Survey', Tennant Creek Police Station by Friday 8 September 2006.*

1. How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Male or Female (please circle)

3. Do you (please tick):

- Work full time
- Work part time
- Attend school/university full time
- Attend school/university part time

4. Please rate your enjoyment for the following activities:

1 = Do not Enjoy      2 = Enjoy      3 = Highly Enjoy

- Sport – (favourite) \_\_\_\_\_
- Outdoor (e.g. camping)
- Arts (crafts, drawing)
- Performing Arts (eg drama, dancing)
- Music (eg live performances)
- Reading/Writing (eg competitions, poetry writing)
- Technological (e.g. computers, game consoles etc)
- Other (please list) \_\_\_\_\_

5. Do you think there is a lack of entertainment and things for youth to do in Tennant Creek?  
(Please circle)

Yes

No

Unsure

6. How often do you attend events held in the community for young people? (tick the answer that is most applicable)

- On a regular basis
- Once a month
- A few times a year
- Once a year
- Never

7. Do you think that events held for youth relate to young people's interests? *(Please circle)*

Yes

No

Unsure

8. When youth events are held in your community how do you hear about them?

*(tick the answer that is most applicable)*

Television advertisements

In newspapers

On the Internet

From your friends

From your school

Other *(please list)* \_\_\_\_\_

9. Do you feel events held in the community, aimed at youth, are promoted and advertised enough? *(Please circle)*

Yes

No

Unsure

If no, how can advertising be improved?

\_\_\_\_\_

10. Are you aware of any organisations in your community that coordinate recreational activities or events for young people? *(Please circle)*

Yes

No

Unsure

*If yes, please list*

\_\_\_\_\_

11. Do you think there is a particular age group that doesn't really have any activities/events that caters to them? *(Please circle)*

Yes

No

Unsure

If so, what age?

\_\_\_\_\_

12. Do/did you attend any of the following events/activities in Tennant Creek?

Desert Harmony Week

Tennant Creek Youth Week

Tennant Creek Speedway

Tennant Creek Drags

Tennant Creek Show

Shows/Exhibitions at Tennant Creek Cultural Centre *(please list)* \_\_\_\_\_

Concerts *(please list)* \_\_\_\_\_

Art Exhibitions

Blue Light Disco

Centre Care Disco

Other *(please list)* \_\_\_\_\_

None of the above

13. What events/activities would you like to see happen in Tennant Creek? *(Please list)*

\_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you for participating.*